

# Gerrans School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111860
<b>Local Authority</b>	
<b>Inspection number</b>	337760
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Sadler

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	51
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Annabel Sylvester
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Elvy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Tregassick Road Portscatho Truro TR2 5ED
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including records of pupils' progress, the school development plan and questionnaires completed by pupils, staff and 18 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of current pupils, and of those recently left, especially in mathematics and writing
- the school's success in matching teaching and the curriculum to the wide range of abilities and needs in each class
- evidence to support the school's judgements that behaviour, assessment, the leadership of teaching and learning, and equality of opportunity are outstanding
- the quality and impact of the school's evaluation of its performance.

## Information about the school

This small school serves rural communities in the Roseland Peninsula. Almost all pupils are of White British ethnicity. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is average. The school is organised into two classes, one for children and pupils aged 3 to 7, the other for pupils aged 7 to 11. The former class includes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage of both Nursery and Reception age. At the time of the inspection most of these children attended in the mornings only. The number of available adults enables many teaching activities to take place in smaller age- or ability-related groups.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has improved in a number of respects since its last inspection. Pupils love their school and many told inspectors why this is: 'We don't just sit at desks and learn, we use costumes and do acting', is an example of what they wrote on their questionnaires. Pupils say they feel very safe at school and have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and healthy in their rural environment. For example, older pupils led an assembly on cycling safety and involved younger pupils in their questioning. This was also an example of their excellent contribution to the community. Pupils' enthusiasm for school has led to their improved attendance, which is above average. Pupils behave well and take good care of each other, enhancing the good care and support they receive from adults in the school.

The small number of pupils means that data must be treated with caution, and inspectors carefully examined the school's good records of each pupil's individual progress. These show that, while standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average in recent years, progress has been good, especially in English and science, although progress in mathematics has been slower. The school identified slow progress in girls' writing and took successful action to improve it, and more recently has identified weaknesses in pupils' mental mathematics. Pupils have good skills of using information and communication technology (ICT) which are enhanced by the wide range of equipment to which they have access. Pupils have a good knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses and of what they need to learn next, due to the good use of targets and assessment of their own work, which is part of the good teaching they receive. They are excited by the curriculum, with its many opportunities to work outdoors or through role play, and say that the subjects they like learning least are where this does not happen, such as in religious education (RE). There are plenty of opportunities for the development of literacy and ICT skills in a range of subjects, but this is less evident in the use of mathematical skills. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make satisfactory progress. Those starting school with lower levels of skill and knowledge than expected make good progress, but the staff's understanding of using assessment to promote children's independence is still developing, impeding the progress particularly of more able children.

Leaders and managers have ambition to improve the school further. They have successfully identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, such as in the Early Years Foundation Stage where staff have been retrained to take on new roles. Sensible action has been taken by governors to manage the school's diminishing budget. The quality of this forward planning and the positive impact of the action taken demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further. A reduction in the number of

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classes has led to reduced confidence among some parents, and positive steps have been taken to improve communication with them and their access to staff. A recent consultation with parents of Years 3 to 6, planned to fit in with parents' prior commitments, enabled 95% of them to attend.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards and improve progress in mathematics by improving opportunities for pupils to develop:
  - their skills of mental mathematics
  - their mathematical and problem-solving skills in a range of subjects and activities.
- Improve the progress, particularly of more able children, in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - using accurate assessment to plan the next steps for each child, developing children's independence by increasing their opportunities for autonomous learning.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils are confident and articulate. For example, pupils in Year 2 can explain the use of the apostrophe, and by Year 6 they can explain to a younger classmate how to locate a photograph on the computer, and how to cut and paste it into a piece of work. They write intelligently and at length in a range of styles, for example when preparing a web article on a school activity. As a result, standards of English are above average and pupils make good progress. Standards of mathematics are average and improving, and progress is satisfactory. Older pupils can use Pythagoras' theorem, or calculate the value-added tax (VAT) on an item. They are less confident with mental mathematics, and the school has identified that they need more opportunities to practise these and their problem-solving skills. However, because pupils also make good progress in a range of subjects including science, ICT and art, their overall progress is good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve equally well.

Pupils behave well and have very good relationships with staff and with each other. Some of the younger pupils in the Years 3 to 6 class can be a little immature at times, but there is no malice or bullying. They are keen to follow a healthy diet and to take plenty of exercise. Pupils have a good level of respect for the environment and for people of different backgrounds, usefully enhanced by the headteacher's experiences from a visit to India. In the local community, they take part in events such as harvest festival, Remembrance Day and dance festivals. All these activities contribute to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

Teaching is good, and is very well supported by the team of teaching assistants. Work is planned well to meet the needs of the wide range of age and attainment in each class. Teachers use assessment well to identify weaknesses, for example through marking and the use of targets, so that they can be rectified. Work is generally challenging, as for example when Year 3 pupils planned an investigation into the strength of magnets. On occasions the planning is unnecessarily complex, with pupils in the same class undertaking very different activities. Opportunities to develop skills of literacy and ICT through a range of subjects are used well, although this is less commonly the case with mathematical skills.

Pupils are excited by the curriculum, especially opportunities to work in the extensive and varied school grounds, to learn actively such as through role play, and to work with pupils from other small schools in the area. The curriculum is extended through French, sporting opportunities and a range of clubs such as art and cookery. A production of 'Romeo and Juliet' had encouraged some pupils to undertake their own research on Shakespeare at home, without prompting.

Pupils are cared for well and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities get good support. All staff have received a high level of training in child protection. This enables staff to remain alert, although issues of pupil welfare arise rarely in this school.

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Under the good leadership of the headteacher, the school has made significant improvement since the last inspection in 2006. There is an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses that is shared by all staff and governors. However, slow progress in mathematics was not identified at an early enough stage. The governors meet their statutory responsibilities well. For example, all requirements to keep children safe are in place and are of good quality, and the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Active steps are taken to broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world, for example through links with schools in Wolverhampton and the Punjab. Governors are also active in exploring partnerships with other schools that may enhance pupils' education in a cost-effective manner. The reduction in the number of classes was handled well, with staff appropriately retrained for new roles. The school promotes equality of opportunity effectively and all pupils make similarly good progress. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well and challenge the school to improve, although the small number of pupils makes comparisons with other schools a challenging task. Most parents have full confidence in the school and have particular praise for the Nursery provision. The school has worked hard to tackle the concerns of a minority of parents about the small size of some year groups.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with a wide range of skill levels. Those at an earlier stage in their development make good progress, especially in their social and emotional development and communication skills. Children rapidly grow in confidence. For example, a nursery child correctly answered the headteacher's question in assembly, to say that fireworks are used to celebrate Divali, in front of the whole school. In some areas, such as their mathematical development and their writing, the progress of higher attaining children is slower.

Some staff have recently been retrained to work with children of this age. They are beginning to make better use of assessment to plan the work, but this is not yet fully secure. Activities are planned with an appropriate mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities, and the classroom and outside area are very well resourced for provision of this size. On occasion staff intervene too readily in play, as when a child was playing vigorously, but not inappropriately, with his toy dinosaurs. Children are very well cared for, a fact recognised by parents, and are well known by staff. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory and improving.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

Parents are generally positive about the school. All feel their children are safe and making sufficient progress. A minority are concerned about aspects of communication, but some agree that this is improving. Inspectors found that positive steps had been taken to improve the school's communication with parents. A small proportion of parents are concerned about the limited number of children of similar age with whom their own children can interact, although this matter is not of course directly under the school's control.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gerrans School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 18 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 51 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	61	7	39	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	78	4	22	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	10	56	8	44	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	50	8	44	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	11	61	6	33	1	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	56	7	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	56	6	33	1	6	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	9	50	7	39	1	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	7	39	11	61	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	6	33	11	61	0	0	1	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	6	33	10	56	2	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	6	33	6	33	3	17	2	11
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	8	44	10	56	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gerrans School, Portscatho, TR2 5ED

We enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. We would like to thank those of you who gave up your time to talk to us. Yours is a good school. We were impressed with your good behaviour, and the way you look after each other.

You make good progress in your work and reach average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time you leave Year 6. You told us you feel very safe and we agree that the adults do everything they can to keep you safe. You are taught well. You have good discussions, for example about how to separate substances or find the strongest magnet. You know a lot about keeping healthy. You told us that lots of things you do at school are exciting, like role play and acting, or going on trips. Your attendance is above average and better than when inspectors last came to the school.

The headteacher, staff and governors run the school well. They have lots of good links, especially with other schools, so you will feel confident when you go to secondary school. Most of your parents think highly of the school because the staff take excellent care of you. They especially like the Nursery.

We have asked the staff and governors in your school to do two things. We have asked them to make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to practise your mental maths and solve problems. If you think of a problem involving maths, politely tell the teacher. We have also asked that Nursery and Reception children get even more opportunities to learn through play, and that teachers keep a careful check on their learning and progress.

Good luck in the future

Yours sincerely

Paul Sadler

Lead Inspector

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